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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to determine the extent to which psychometric testing (the measurement of various aspects of human behavior, such as ability, personality, or interests, using psychological tests) is used in the recruitment practices of small businesses. The project also developed a course consisting of five modular units covering the process of selection and recruitment and marketed the course to small businesses and colleges. Data were gathered through a survey developed for the project and mailed to 1,980 organizations employing more than 10 people in the London, England, area; 183 usable questionnaires were returned. The survey found that interviewing was the selection method most often used. Testing was not widely used: about 30 percent of respondents used ability or personality tests, whereas 58 percent used performance tests. Twenty-five percent of respondents wanted to improve their recruiting techniques, but lack of resources or institutional barriers prevent them. Companies expressed a demand for three services offered by the project: training in recruitment skills, training in all aspects of testing, and consultancy with individual companies. Recommendations were made in the areas of needs assessment, marketing, consultancy, and developing pilot courses for businesses. (Appendixes include a list of project steering committee members, the survey letter and questionnaire, course materials, press coverage, test standards guidelines, terminology, and useful names and addresses. A 12-item bibliography and a glossary are also included.) (KC)

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THE RIGHT PERSON FOR THE JOB

Using occupational testing to improve recruitment and selection

Sue Waters

Mani Winterstein

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We would like to thank the managing directors, personnel managers and other staff who took the trouble to complete our survey questionnaire. We would also like to thank those organisations who, for various reasons, did not think it appropriate to take part but who, nevertheless, replied to our survey letter.

We are most appreciative of the support given by members of the Project Steering Committee (see Appendix A) who, as well as attending meetings, provided specialised and technical information and helped with difficult activities, such as marketing. We are particularly indebted to the Institute of Personnel Management and NFER-Nelson for their co-operation.

Sue Waters
Mani Winterstein

FOREWORD

This FEU/PICKUP report addresses a topical area where FE colleges, given the appropriate staff expertise*, can respond to local employers' training needs.

The context for the report is the skills shortage in the British workforce, which highlights the need for employers to select the right person for the job. Recent Institute of Personnel Management publications have responded to this need by promoting increased sophistication in recruitment techniques and selection procedures.**

The authors of this report, Sue Waters and Mani Winterstein, concentrating on small and medium-sized organisations, begin by examining recruitment practice, including the use of a wide range of psychometric tests which provide relatively objective and unbiased information on candidates' skills. They recommend how a college may market such training to local employers, and give sound advice to colleges who respond to employers' requests for their advice as consultants on recruitment and selection and the application of psychometric tests.

Where programmes of training for employers as recruiters and test users are needed, the authors describe a series of workshop events which they designed so that participants could attend single or groups of sessions to suit their individual needs and convenience. They report on the piloting of such a programme for employers from a variety of small and medium-sized organisations, for whom training is provided through the application of experiential learning techniques, backed up by training manuals.

FEU would like to thank Sue Waters and Mani Winterstein for their energy and tenacity in pursuing this work and Richmond upon Thames College for hosting their training initiative.

We are also grateful to members of the Steering Committee (see Appendix A) and others who offered valuable time and expertise.

FEU would welcome comments on the report; for further information please contact Sue Waters on 081 994 0597.

Julia Coleman
Principal Officer
Further Education Unit

* See the Introduction for 'Recommendations for other colleges' (p. 4).

** *Code on Occupational Testing* (IPM, 1989), and *Psychological Testing* by Toplis, Dulewicz and Fletcher (IPM, 1987).

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The primary concern of this research was the extent to which **psychometric testing** is used in the recruitment practices of small businesses.

Psychometric testing is the measurement of various aspects of human behaviour, such as ability, personality, interests or achievements, primarily using psychological tests. (For a more detailed explanation of terminology see Appendix F.)

A psychological test is a structured task on the basis of which inferences are drawn concerning such things as aptitude, attainments, ability, etc. It is not the same as an 'end of term' test or even a performance test.

Well-structured psychological tests should all possess psychometric properties but those used in psychometric testing will also be **standardised** and **objective** to ensure that they are equally fair to all candidates.

Psychometric tests can be used for different purposes and in different settings, the main areas being occupational, educational and clinical. Although the same measures may be used in a variety of ways, this report focuses on the use of psychological tests as part of psychometric testing in an occupational setting.

When preliminary discussions were being held with FEU about the project in the autumn of 1987, occupational testing, as a means for improving recruitment, had already become very topical. At the time, the Institute of Personnel Management (IPM) was about to publish a book on testing, *Psychological Testing — A Practical Guide* (Toplis, 1987), and was later to become involved with the British Psychological Society (BPS), the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) and the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) in drawing up a code of practice for test users. This was subsequently published as *The IPM Code on Occupational Testing*, in February 1989. The BPS and the test publishers were also involved in discussions about the standards required for training in psychometric testing, the Test Standards Committee of the BPS being defunct.

Previous research in both the UK and the United States had indicated the value of using tests in selection (Ghiselli, 1973; Hunter, 1982 and 1984; Smith, 1988), and the major test publishers appeared to have no problems filling their courses in occupational testing. On the other hand, the survey undertaken by Robertson and Makin in 1986 into the methods actually used in 108 organisations in Great Britain revealed that managers still relied heavily on interviews and references. Over 70% of their sample never used cognitive tests. In larger organisations, however, the use of assessment centres and biodata was increasing. A more recent survey (Bevan and Fryatt, 1988) of 320 various organisations, published just before this research was concluded, had similar findings about methods of selection. It found that 84% never used cognitive tests and 78.3% never used personality tests.

In the United States during the late 1970s, psychological tests were subject to criticism on the grounds that they discriminated unfairly against minority groups. Employers became wary of using tests because of the potential legal difficulties involved. Nevertheless, writers still argued for their use ('There are no alternatives better than tests when their validity, degree of adverse impact, and feasibility of use are taken into account' Tenopyr, 1981), suggesting that if any single method were used, it should be testing.

There is a danger of tests being used incorrectly, and of some tests not being fair to minority groups. The IPM code of practice has been designed to prevent this. The reason for reliance on out-of-date

selection methods seemed to have less to do with fear of breaking the law than with lack of information and training, particularly as far as smaller and expanding organisations were concerned. With this in mind, this project was set up to survey the selection methods of smaller businesses and respond to the needs identified, particularly in the field of psychometric testing.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The research had three main aims:

- to survey the existing recruitment and selection methods employed in small businesses or branches of larger companies;
- to improve efficiency by developing (a) a cost-effective, locally based consultancy and training service which would be on site and tailor made to meet the specific needs of the organisation and (b) a college-based short training course which would bring together representatives from a number of different small organisations in the area;
- to demonstrate to employers the methodology and the usefulness of building their own bank of normative data for any psychometric tests they used.

OVERVIEW

Schedule for the project

Funding for the project started in October 1987. A steering group (see Appendix A) with representatives from the IPM, test publishers, industry and education met for the first time in November 1987. By the time the third meeting was held in May 1988, the first stage of the work had been accomplished: 2000 local organisations had been surveyed; nearly 200 replies had been processed and the needs of respondents analysed; and the extent of current training provision in psychometric testing had been assessed.

During the next six months, time was spent:

- designing a course consisting of five modular units covering the entire process of selection and recruitment, from job analysis to training in testing
- writing course materials with test units that stood up to the scrutiny of the test publishers, by complying with EOC and CRE guidelines
- designing a brochure to market the pilot courses
- responding to consultancy requests about recruitment procedures

Between January and May 1989, the main activities were:

- further work on course materials
- the marketing of the remaining pilots, with considerable success, after publicity from the IPM
- delivering the pilot courses
- writing the final report
- liaison with organisations such as the Open College about the possibility of further work and the publishing of materials

OUTCOMES

The outcomes were:

- This report.
- A marketable package of training materials and plans for five experiential workshops (Units 1–5), including guideline notes for participants. All materials complied with the requirements of the legislation relating to equal opportunities, and those on psychometric testing conformed to the standards previously laid down by the BPS and the test publishers. It was considered that some of the materials might be adapted for publication as a self-learning package. Four of the workshops — Units 2–5 — were piloted.

Unit 1: Recruitment — finding and selecting the right people.

Unit 2: Interviewing and Counselling Skills — a practical workshop.

Unit 3: Introduction to Testing — a day to familiarise participants with the use of psychological tests in the selection process.

Unit 4: Test Administration (two days) – a course leading to a qualification in test administration. This was only open to people who had completed Unit 3 or equivalent.

Unit 5: Test Interpretation (two days) — this was only open to those who had completed Unit 4.

Anyone who satisfactorily completed all three testing units was able to register as a test user with the publishing companies, and buy, use and interpret a wide range of ability and aptitude tests.

Consultancy work covering all aspects of recruitment and selection was undertaken in several companies.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Survey

The survey results were similar in some respects to both the 1986 and the 1988 research: the interview was the selection method most used by the organisations in our sample.

Testing is still not widely used. Approximately 30% of all respondents used ability tests some or all of the time, and the same percentage used personality tests. (The 1988 survey found 16% and 22% respectively.) A greater number, 58% used performance tests. Nineteen per cent said they never used tests of any kind in the selection process. Methods such as biodata and assessment centres were used by a tiny minority of large organisations.

Although there were many stated difficulties in recruiting and selecting the right people; shortage of candidates and their inability to reach an acceptable standard were often seen as the problem, rather than inefficient methods of recruitment. Twenty-five per cent of the sample wanted to improve their techniques, but lack of resources or institutional barriers prevented them.

There was a clearly expressed demand for the three services we offered: training in recruitment skills (job analysis, writing job descriptions, advertising, interviewing); training and information in all aspects of testing; and consultancy to meet the specific demands of individual companies.

Market provision

Although private organisations in the UK (mainly test publishers) offer training in testing, only two other educational institutions could be found that offered anything at all: one the traditional five-day basic course, and the other a one-day course on the use of tests in selection for middle managers. No other organisation at the time of the research seemed to offer training on a modular basis that led to registration as a test user.

A conclusion was reached that the courses in testing offered by the test publishers, because of their price and sophistication, were aimed at the top end of the market, and probably did not meet the needs of the smaller business. Furthermore, many of these training courses were linked to particular publishing companies and therefore limited to a narrow range of tests.

Overall, 57 institutions were identified as offering training in other areas of recruitment. In the immediate locality courses on offer were mainly directed at new businesses, with the emphasis on practicalities such as tax and record keeping. In Richmond upon Thames College itself, interview skills were part of a course for recruitment consultants. No college appeared to be offering a complete recruitment and selection package as originally envisaged.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OTHER COLLEGES

The following recommendations are expanded at the end of the relevant sections of the report.

Survey method

- Have the questionnaire (or other survey materials) professionally designed and printed: then carry out the survey on a small sample of the targeted group in case of any possible errors, omissions or ambiguities.
- Compile a relevant and up-to-date database of employers.
- Invest in essential equipment such as a word processor for communications and the preparation of training materials, and a telephone answering machine for optimum contact with potential clients.

Survey findings

There is a gap in the provision of training in recruitment and selection techniques that further education (FE) colleges can provide. This sort of local, economic and accessible provision would appeal to smaller businesses and branches of larger companies.

Materials and course development

- Ensure that any materials/training in the field of recruitment and selection complies with equal opportunities legislation and codes of practice laid down by professional bodies.
- Currently, any training in testing is scrutinised by the test publishers who tend to observe standards similar to the BPS guidelines. It is likely that, in future, course directors will need to be chartered psychologists who will be expected to ensure that their courses are adequate.
- It is important to enlist the help and co-operation of experts in this field, particularly those who are setting the standards.

Marketing

FE colleges need to improve their image and credibility with the business world.

Marketing self-financing courses is very difficult. Colleges may be competing with organisations where this is a specialised function commanding large resources. The most economic and effective strategy is a press release in a relevant publication at a salient time. Good publicity material and efficient reception facilities for handling enquiries are essential. A specialised marketing department would be very desirable.

When marketing a course in testing, there is a fundamental need to overcome scepticism and correct misconceptions about its place in recruitment and selection. It is essential to establish personal credentials as trainers in testing.

Consultancy

Colleges often have an inaccurate and romantic view of industry. Skills used in an educational setting are transferable and therefore colleges working with the business community should not be overawed by its style and presentation.

It is, however, very important for colleges to present their skills and resources attractively and professionally. This includes every element of the 'package', from the staff involved to the quality of a typed letter.

Staff offering consultancy should be precise about what they can offer and not promise more than they can realistically provide. This kind of work involves flexibility and an ability to adapt skills to different situations within the bounds of one's own expertise.

Any offer must be clearly set out and carefully costed, bearing in mind the market price and all the time spent, both off and on site.

An agreement in writing is essential and may need to be renegotiated for each new task or when there is a change of personnel.

Pilot courses

It is essential to pilot all courses and review the material and the structure of each day in the light of experience.

The ideal number of participants for an experiential workshop appears to be eight.

Unless it includes purpose-built conference facilities on site, a college environment is not usually suitable for holding training courses for industry. It is probably worth spending money on specialist accommodation.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

MARKET PROVISION

In order to confirm that there was a gap in the market for provision of training in recruitment and selection skills, a brief survey of existing training packages and courses was undertaken. This examined courses in Richmond upon Thames College (hereafter referred to as Richmond College), as well as other colleges and private and non-profit-making organisations.

The relevant departments in Richmond College and three local colleges (Hammersmith and West London College, Hounslow Borough College, and Kingston College of FE) were contacted directly and the Materials and Resources Information Service (MARIS) was used to give access to information on similar courses in colleges further afield. At this stage, the focus was on courses that included psychological testing under the following headings: staff selection, personnel selection, interviewing, psychological testing, and recruitment.

The PICKUP Training Directory gives information on full- and part-time courses lasting from a half-day to three months. These are run by universities, polytechnics, colleges and private organisations. The directory can be accessed via the Education Counselling and Credit Transfer Information System (ECCTIS).

At Richmond College, there is a self-financing course leading to a Diploma of the Institute of Employment Consultants (IEC). This course is primarily aimed at employment agencies and covers various aspects of recruitment from that perspective. It includes an option in principles of selection testing and assessment, at an introductory level.

All the business studies departments of the three local colleges run a selection of courses for new small businesses. These include Training Enterprise and Education Directorate (TEED, formerly the Training Agency) -sponsored Business Enterprise Courses, Enterprise Awareness days, and modular courses for small businesses in their first year. The emphasis throughout is on basic tax information, record keeping, forecasting, and obtaining finance. Interviewing techniques and job applications are taught within the syllabuses of college communications courses from the applicant's perspective.

Two educational institutions specifically mentioned psychological testing. One of these offers a five-day course on **Psychological Testing for Personnel Selection.** This course gives practical instruction on the use and interpretation of tests, and is aimed at increasing the skills, and therefore the employment prospects, of personnel staff. The other offers a one-day course on **Selection and Testing** for middle to senior management.

There are about 60 listed courses in the UK offering training in different aspects of selection and interviewing. None of these appears to include psychometric testing. Most of them are based in colleges.

There are a number of well-established private and commercial organisations, such as NFER-Nelson, Saville and Holdsworth Ltd, and Thomas International, who offer consultancy and/or training in testing and other aspects of recruitment and selection. One private company had a grant from the Training Agency (now TEED), for management training and was using Dale Carnegie to provide a range of testing services.

It became clear that many colleges provide some form of training in recruitment and selection skills, though interview skills are very often taught from the point of view of the interviewee. Training in psychometric testing is not offered at present, perhaps because the increased use of tests in selection is a relatively recent development in the UK.

The courses that are on offer, largely in the private sector, serve the top end of the market and do not meet the needs of smaller businesses. A number of respondents whose parent companies had their own training departments either used these private sector consultancy services or bought their tests. In addition to this, most private consultants trained participants solely in the use of their own tests, offering very limited access to those published by others.

Comments

The survey revealed that smaller companies who wished to obtain training which was not tied to a particular publishing house were not catered for.

Telephone access to staff of busy colleges was possible but not easy. Leaflets were rarely available and a member of the business community requiring information would have some difficulty obtaining it.

Library services and access to the latest information technology were essential. For example, MARIS short courses can only be accessed through Prestel by using a modem which allows access by telephone.

CLIENT SURVEY

A questionnaire was sent to local companies to obtain information on client needs. Although the emphasis of the project was on the use of tests in the selection process, the survey of client needs was widened by involving the whole spectrum of selection and recruitment skills, including writing advertisements, conducting job analysis interviews, and basic interview techniques. The survey had two specific aims: to find out how organisations actually recruit staff, and to obtain data on the perceived training needs of the companies involved in the survey. Details are contained in the next section.

SURVEY METHOD

INTRODUCTION

A postal survey was the most economic way of obtaining information so a questionnaire was sent out accompanied by an explanatory letter (Appendix B).

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

The object of the questionnaire was to obtain information about:

- the organisation and the numbers employed
- selection methods used
- use of psychometric tests
- respondents' training and consultancy needs

Each section was simplified to make completion as easy as possible. Some basic training offers were made at the bottom of page one in order to attract the interest of the smaller businesses and more sophisticated training offers were placed at the end of page two.

Previous experience of questionnaires has proved that although it is important to make a good first impression (see response rates pp 9–10), it is equally vital to try to anticipate every piece of information that might be required, particularly if it is to be stored on a computer database, since the parameters cannot be radically changed later. The greatest omission in this case was the address of the organisation which led to some difficulties in marrying up the returns with the company on the database, particularly where different personnel or branches were concerned.

It is also important to be as **unambiguous** as possible. Where a breakdown according to type and level of employment was requested on numbers employed, this proved inappropriate for some companies. Either they did not know exact numbers or the survey categories did not match theirs. Some respondents therefore provided a total number, for which there was no proper space on the form or on the database. Where incomplete information was received, the missing data was obtained by telephone. This was time-consuming and could have been avoided.

On being contacted, a number of organisations had expressed anxiety as to what would happen to the figures given. An explanation that they were being used in a statistical survey and that anonymity would be guaranteed should have been included in the initial letter and might have increased the response rate.

The difficulties were not major, but would probably have been avoided if a draft questionnaire had first been sent to a small sample.

ESTABLISHING A DATABASE

Target clients

Although the original focus of the research was on psychometric testing, the design of the questionnaire took into account that some small and expanding businesses might also want help with first-stage techniques such as writing job descriptions. It seemed, therefore, that the target customers would probably fall into three groups with slightly differing needs: these might correlate with their size — small and expanding; they might be established but lacking information and training; and they could be larger and perhaps reviewing procedures and thinking about consultancy.

A target figure of 2000 addresses was fixed with an intended ten per cent return rate. Where the information was available, those with more than ten employees were chosen, assuming that new small businesses would not be recruiting in sufficiently high numbers for there to be a demand for training in recruitment methods. An upper limit was not imposed since in some very large concerns a local branch might recruit autonomously but some major companies were eliminated where it was known or suspected that our offer was inappropriate. The survey area was limited to 15 Greater London Boroughs, which were all within easy travelling distance of Richmond College for clients who might otherwise be served by more local colleges.

Sources

The bulk of addresses came from local free newspapers which provided named contacts in organisations that were currently recruiting staff by placing job advertisements and the Kompass Business Directory, Volume 2, which lists all organisations by London Borough. Both sources proved very successful.

A list was provided of all employers who had sent students to Richmond College. This was of limited use as many seemed to be 'one person' concerns, and many others were outside the geographical area. However, about half the names on this list were used. Another list that was obtained from the Borough Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) co-ordinator did not prove to be useful because of duplication and the small size of the organisations.

Other sources, such as chamber of commerce handbooks, were explored, but many of the entries were very small retail concerns and therefore unsuitable.

The possibility of buying computer lists from specialist companies was excluded since it was found to be not only expensive, (£200 upwards), but also difficult to define small businesses by size other than those employing over or under 25 employees. This was too vague to be of use.

The members of the Richmond Small Business Club were too small and too new to business to be recruiting. The manager of the local Enterprise Agency was contacted, and while he was personally very helpful, his contacts were also too small for the survey sample. A listing in the 1986/87 Thompson's Local Directory of 'large users of postal services' was used. Unfortunately many of these were no longer registered at that address or had ceased trading altogether.

Compiling the database

All the information was compiled onto a computer database, starting with names and addresses so that new information could be entered as it arrived, and summaries of specific information could be extracted. This would also create a bank of information available to other co-ordinators of initiatives in the college.

MAILING AND FOLLOW-UP

A low statistical return of around ten per cent was considered probable but a total of at least 200 replies was needed for a statistically viable and representative sample of small businesses.

Questionnaires were sent to 1413 organisations during the last two weeks of January 1988 followed by a further mailing during March, bringing the total to 1980. Several of the companies who had not responded initially were contacted by telephone. Most of the responses were negative. It was often impossible to speak to the named contact and receipt of the questionnaire was usually denied.

Contact was also made with respondents who had not given complete information due to the ambiguities in the design of the questionnaire.

In order to maintain the interest of those who had responded positively to the first mail shot, and to get some idea of the actual demand for pilot courses, all the organisations which expressed interest in further training were contacted. Only a few said that they were no longer interested. Of these, one was too small, having only three staff, two had gone to one of the major consultancies in the field (one since receipt of the questionnaire) and one had only been interested in placing job advertisements, and did not want to look at anything else.

All other organisations expressed an interest in seeing a course outline. Several expressed surprise at being consulted about the proposed course. Feedback confirmed the need for the proposed workshops to be daytime courses held during the week and offered as separate modules.

RESPONSE

Over ten per cent of the questionnaires were returned or acknowledged. Out of 201 replies, 87 expressed a positive interest, 94 were negative, and another ten indicated they might be interested later. The remainder were from companies who were interested in the survey but felt it was inappropriate for them for a variety of reasons. There were several replies from larger companies (e.g. Richard Costain, Shell, Sainsbury's), who had been contacted through local branches. They all had centralised recruitment policies but expressed a very positive interest in the research.

A leading brewery was found to use psychological tests for all management positions down to bar staff and the selection of licensee couples, and carried out its own testing using NFER-Nelson or Saville and Holdsworth tests. A major difficulty seemed to be identifying the profile needed for each job.

COMMENTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Some useful points on survey methods emerged from this exercise:

- The questionnaire must be well designed, therefore:
  - — anticipate all information requirements;
  - — try out on a sample as a check for ambiguities.
- There are no short cuts to a useful database so:
  - — old lists may be of little value;
  - — locate sources that exactly meet target requirements.
- A computer/word processor is essential, therefore:
  - — database definition is crucial;
  - — choice of hardware and software is important;
  - — train personnel to input data.
- Telephone enquiries are not an efficient use of time so:
  - — they need to follow the mailshot **immediately** in order to be effective;
  - — apparent interest should be treated with caution.

SURVEY ANALYSIS

COMPANY INFORMATION

One hundred and eighty-three usable questionnaires were returned from widely varied organisations. Table 1 shows the range of business activities:

Table 1: Type of business activity

Business classification	Organisations
Engineering	27
Building	21
Computing	11
Transport and distribution	9
Hotels and travel	5
Entertainment, leisure	7
Education	2
Food, drink, catering	12
Art, design, architecture	5
Banking, insurance, finance	11
Oil, mineral exploration	5
Local government	2
Other manufacturing	23
Other services	21
Non-food retailing	11
Utilities	3
Not classified	8
Total	183

In spite of efforts to limit the survey to small or expanding companies, some responses were received from larger concerns, as shown in table 2. In a number of cases the questionnaire was sent to a local office, but the reply came from a head office. Sometimes the figures given were for head office only, others were more ambiguous.

Table 2: Numbers employed

Size	% Total	Employees	Organisations
Small	64.5%	0–25	45
		25–99	48
		100–199	25
Medium	10.9%	200–499	20
Large	6.0%	500–999	5
		1000 +	6
No information	18.6%		34
Total			183

RECRUITMENT METHODS

Table 3 summarises the frequency with which various selection methods were used:

Table 3 : Selection methods

Method	Frequency					
	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Interview	175	95.6	5	2.7	3	1.6
Application	146	79.8	16	8.7	21	11.5
Reference	112	61.2	69	37.7	2	1.1
Ability test	12	6.6	42	23.0	129	70.5
Personality test	12	6.6	44	24.0	127	69.4
Special aptitudes	7	3.8	48	26.2	128	69.9
Performance test	19	10.4	87	47.5	77	42.1
Assessment centre	4	2.2	20	10.9	159	86.9

The general picture that emerged was very similar to the Robertson and Makin (1986) findings even though the 1986 research focused on management selection, whereas our survey covered all selection in the branch or unit. The 1986 research sampled 108 companies, most of which were large (more than 500 employed), with only 12 medium and 13 small (under 200); our sample covered mainly small and medium concerns but the findings on the use of ability tests were almost identical. A very recent telephone survey, commissioned by Saville and Holdsworth Ltd (1989), sampled 300 companies employing more than 1000 people. They found that two-thirds had used ability tests during the previous year. This difference could be because the companies in their sample were much larger.

In our sample, interviews were the favoured method of selection, with application forms and references in second and third place. There were eight respondents who either interviewed sometimes or not at all. Four of these were very small concerns, one employed 28 people and the other three gave no information about numbers employed.

Only 19 per cent of the sample (35 organisations), never used tests of any kind in the selection process. This suggests that 148 organisations do carry out some kind of testing including about 106 organisations which said they sometimes used performance tests. Since the meaning of 'performance test' was not defined it is likely that the testing practice referred to was very varied and probably not objective (e.g. a 'home-made' typing test, or other practical task).

A larger group of 89 organisations never used ability tests, personality tests, tests of specific ability, or even an assessment centre, suggesting that 94 do use these methods either always or occasionally.

The 35 organisations which did not test at all were mainly small, with eight employing fewer than 25, 15 employing 25–99, and three employing 100–199. There were however, three organisations with more than 200 employees: two engineering consultants and one child-safety equipment manufacturer. (No employment information was received about the remaining six.) The smaller concerns included building and building services, engineering, manufacturing, architecture, retailing, food services, and leisure.

Other factors that organisations took into account in the selection process were: induction courses; appearance and presentation of the candidate; handwriting; samples of previous work; various achievement tests (mathematics, arithmetic, literacy); and practical laboratory work. Biodata was used by a few of the larger organisations. One respondent felt that 'personal chemistry and personal judgement are paramount'.

DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

Many employers had difficulties in recruiting exactly the right people for the job. Some of these difficulties were peculiar to London and the South East, with relatively low unemployment, high-cost housing, and shortages of skilled and experienced personnel in specific areas. Respondents particularly mentioned the need for personnel in the following areas: information technology, electrical engineering, freight-for-

£0

warding, computer analysis and clinical research. Another demographic problem was the proximity to London and the need to pay competitive salaries. One respondent was moving his company to South Wales because of the need to recruit large numbers.

Many respondents mentioned the difficulty of attracting the right calibre of applicant. This was partly attributed to the increasing shortage of schoolleavers, and also to the low ability and apathy of many who did apply. The managing director of a local manufacturing company saw the problem as 'finding people that have some common sense and who are articulate and numerate as well as being able to spell'. Agencies were criticised for sending inappropriate people and for supplying inaccurate information.

Respondents did recognise that their selection procedures could be improved. The interview was viewed as unreliable and subject to emotional bias, and the lack of interviewing skills in line managers and others was seen as a problem. It is not easy at an interview to obtain objective facts about candidates, such as information about motivation and any areas of weakness they may have. It is also difficult to assess whether these weaknesses can be compensated for by training. However, when performance tests were used or assessments made of portfolio work, they were often felt to be unreliable and unsound predictors of future performance. When there was a large pool of applicants to choose from, selecting the best was another difficulty.

For some respondents, keeping people after their appointment was the main problem. Where turnover was high (operatives, sales staff and hotel staff were specifically mentioned) it was hard to replace them quickly.

Four barriers to improving selection methods, including psychometric testing, were mentioned:

- the need to convince staff and trade unions that new procedures were not prejudicial to them
- allocating sufficient time and resources to this activity
- the constraints of head office policy and existing procedures (particularly local authorities, government departments and large companies with central personnel functions)
- the 'normal hostility to psychometric measures at lower levels'

In spite of the stated difficulties, most respondents seemed satisfied with their current procedures. 'We only employ on personal knowledge, recommendation or private research.' — Senior Partner, Building Surveyors.

Only about 25% thought that their recruitment methods could be improved.

PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING PRACTICE

Eighty-nine organisations said they never used psychometric tests. Four major reasons were offered on the questionnaire for not using tests and all of them were endorsed with similar frequency, although 'financial considerations' was given least often:

Table 4: Reasons for not using psychometric tests

No-one trained in testing	51
Not considered useful	47
No information about tests available	45
Financial considerations	37

Other reasons given by the respondents included:

- too time-consuming, and logistics of testing groups questionable
- not fail-safe enough
- doubts about predictive validity
- problems defining job profile and knowing precisely what to test
- not appropriate for low level and unskilled jobs

'the best test is to put them to work for a week and see how they cope under close supervision' — Managing Director, Building Services

'testing is only useful for large groups in specialised fields. I would not use it generally in recruitment' — Personnel Officer, Computer Industry

- not appropriate when there is a high turnover of staff
- good interview techniques eliminate the need for tests

  'face-to-face conversations are more revealing and adequate in assessing character' — Director, Building Contracting Company
- tests were suitable for large organisations only
- previous bad experiences
  - The personnel officer in a water company stated that the people recruited as a result of testing had left, and now they relied on qualifications and 'gut feelings'.
  - In another organisation 'the right person test-wise was not the right person for the job'.
  - Another person, who presumably had had a less-than-useful experience, commented that tests were not used because of 'the ability of the testers'
- unnerving for candidates
- false mystique

  'Psychological testing still has an air of "mystery" about it. I think more could be done to educate managers on the benefits of using tests without bogging them down with having to learn how to do the tests themselves.'

There is some truth in many of these statements but they also reveal the need for education and information about objective tests.

Ninety-four organisations claimed to use tests other than performance tests some or all of the time. In spite of this the section on the questionnaire asking for details was rarely completed. The incomplete data showed that at least 13 organisations used consultants to do their testing, and at least 49 did their own (this included a few who did both).

The details about which tests were used, and for which positions were very sparse. The possible reasons for this could be that the person completing the form was not the person responsible for testing, that the tests were 'home-made' or simply that the request was completed less thoroughly since it was on page two of the questionnaire.

The publishing companies mentioned most frequently were Thomas International, Saville and Holdsworth Ltd and NFER–Nelson. Very few tests were mentioned by name and those that were, with the exception of the Graduate and Managerial Assessment (GMA) — NFER–Nelson's ability battery for graduates — were personality inventories.

Only one organisation claimed to use tests at all levels of recruitment. Others specified computer personnel, sales staff, management, junior management, executives, graduates, students, and secretarial and clerical staff. In a few organisations, only the typists were tested, using, it is believed, mainly in-house tests.

The importance attached to test information varied from 'very little' to 'very much'. Although two of the larger organisations, — a bank and an advertising agency — felt tests were an 'integral' part of the selection process, the majority of users regarded them as a tool in the selection process to be considered with other indicators. Several believed that test information either sharpened up the interview process or clarified and confirmed decisions made at interview. Only one respondent actually mentioned using tests as a screening device before the interview stage. One respondent stated that test results were good indicators of potential. The view of a personnel manager in contract catering was that tests were 'useful and fun'.

ORGANISATIONAL NEEDS

It was clear from the replies to questions about areas where the organisation might need specific help that there was a demand for all three services being offered.

The assumption that the demand for help with the more basic techniques would come from the smaller businesses was confirmed. The 90 requests for help detailed in table 5 came from 58 organisations, of which 42 were in the small business category, with fewer than 200 employees.

Table 5: Summary of requests for help

Interviews	32
Advertising	25
Writing job descriptions	21
Dealing with applications	12

It had been assumed that larger organisations would be the ones most interested in the more sophisticated methods, including tests and testing. In fact the pattern of response was similar. The total of 136 requests in table 6 came from 57 organisations, and again 42 of these were small.

Table 6: Summary of requests for help

Counselling skills	42
Job appraisal	26
Using tests in selection	24
Test interpretation	24
Test administration	20

Consultancy services were requested by 16 organisations. Thirteen of these employed fewer than 120 people, the remaining three did not supply information about numbers employed. Their business activities covered a wide range: engineering, construction, food manufacturing, charity, insurance, air freight, scientific research, building services, and computing.

Although it was not realistic to assume that all these requests would be followed up by a firm commitment to take up part or all of the package, it was felt that it was worth proceeding with this aspect of the project.

COMMENTS AND CONCLUSIONS

The response rate to the questionnaire was above the norm so the targeting had been effective.

The ambiguity and lack of clarity about some of the items on the questionnaire probably accounted for gaps and/or misleading information, particularly about testing, but it is still possible to make some generalisations about current practice.

Interviews are still heavily relied on in selection decisions. Thirty per cent of organisations use psychological tests some of the time, with an apparent preference for personality measures. Fifty-eight per cent use performance tests, probably of the in-house variety.

People are aware of the difficulties they experience in recruitment, but tend to attribute these more to the lack of good candidates than their own methods. Twenty-five per cent want to improve techniques, but are often hindered by a lack of resources and institutional policy.

The reasons why tests were not used all suggested scepticism, misinformation, or merely a general lack of information about testing. This was in agreement with the 1988 survey findings (Bevan and Fryatt).

The original assumption that smaller and expanding businesses would not, in the main, be using sophisticated selection techniques was confirmed by both the interest shown in the proposed testing courses and requests for consultancy, and the statistics referred to above. A surprisingly large number also indicated a need for help with more basic recruitment and selection techniques.

MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT

OBJECTIVES

The main objective was to produce a series of manuals to accompany the course material. It was not intended to produce a text book on recruitment but, instead, material in a simple, easily digestible form that would support the training given on the course. For the testing units it was necessary to produce substantial manuals in order to conform to the stringent requirements of the test publishers and the BPS. Both require that every course covers all areas of knowledge needed by a registered test user (see Appendix E).

All materials produced had, by law, to conform to the requirements of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Race Relations Act 1976 to ensure that they incorporated the spirit and the letter of the Acts throughout, and that issues raised by this legislation were not relegated to the back page but formed an integral part of the support material.

Since the course consisted of five modules, some of which could be taken alone, it was decided to produce separate manuals for each one. Each manual had to be both an integral part of the course material and a background for one module. It was intended to enable course members to purchase the course book for any module they had not attended. The modules (marketed as 'Units', details in Appendix C) were:

1. Recruitment
2. Interviewing and Counselling Skills
3. Introduction to Testing
4. Test Administration
5. Test Interpretation

As participation in Unit 4 of the testing units assumes a basic understanding of statistics, it was decided to produce a short workbook in addition to the manual. This was sent to course members before the start of the course, to be completed before they attended.

The course style was made experiential using the resources and experience of the group and a minimum of lecture-type information.

After running the pilot courses, it was realised that, if other colleges were to use our materials, a handbook for trainers would also be needed. This was necessary because of the experiential nature of the courses, and the amount of material planned for use from the work situations of the course participants.

CONSTRAINTS

The survey probably aimed at less sophisticated course members than the organisers of existing courses in testing; it was assumed that some participants would have had no experience of some of the skills and concepts. While it was realised that a prerequisite of attendance was the ability to understand the material, it was clearly vital that the material was presented in an easily digestible form.

The requirements of the publishers and the BPS formed considerable constraints on the content, the level, and the amount of exposure given to any one area of work on the testing units. The complexity of the subject and level of knowledge demanded made simplifying difficult. Although some of the subject areas could be covered in less time than in existing courses, this was not possible under existing standards rules. The following is a summary of the factors that had to be taken into account, as recommended by the BPS

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Test Standards Committee 1979, (see Appendix E for proposed changes in policy on standards):

- The course director must be an experienced psychologist currently using tests.
- The course length must be the equivalent of five training days with a minimum of four hours practical work for each test.
- By the end of the course the participants must be able to understand concepts about testing and have good reasons to use tests.
- The total numbers on a course should not exceed 20.
- Content should include both general information about testing and information specific to the tests being taught. Forty per cent should be practical.
- A short written examination at the end of the course is recommended.
- Some follow-up procedure is also recommended to ensure that participants are employing good practice.

The experiential style of the course presentation also affected the style of the supporting manual. Most of the basic material was presented in the manuals but it also involved the production of supporting worksheets and back-up exercises to be included with the manual as training materials for the day.

The manuals could be bought separately so, for example, anyone who had already done an introductory day with one of the test publishers could be exempt from the Unit 3 Introductory Day provided they purchased the manual covering relevant material for that day. Manuals had to be produced that covered the required material both for course members who were only completing one section of the course and for those who were doing the whole course. It was necessary to ensure that any material which had to be repeated in subsequent manuals emphasised different aspects of the subject.

Another constraint on the manuals for the testing units was the copyright issue which did not allow the use of items from any published tests as examples to illustrate the points being made. This is not a problem publishers themselves face when writing course manuals using their own tests.

LIAISON AND CONSULTATION WORK

In order to comply with some of the restrictions mentioned above, it was necessary to liaise with NFER–Nelson. They provided assistance initially by contributing their expertise in steering group meetings. One of their consultants gave very constructive advice on the proposed course outline and they also provided assistance in deciding on the level expected of successful course members, and considerable help with the choice and purchase of testing materials for the pilot course.

The secretary of the BPS working party meeting was contacted to discuss the accreditation of courses such as our own. The standards the BPS originally applied are no longer in operation as they are unhappy with the policing aspect of giving accreditation to courses and are looking at new ways of ensuring that standards are met. They were, however, very helpful in sending their previous guidelines as an aid in setting the standard for our own course construction.

Both the CRE and the EOC were contacted to ensure that the course and materials complied with the law regarding race relations and equal opportunities. They were very helpful and granted access to some valuable material. Some of their literature is included in the course pack.

Since job analysis was included in the course content for Unit 1, a visit was paid to Dr Kandola of Pearn and Kandola, authorities in this field. The purpose of the visit was to update our own information in this area and gain permission to use their suggested job analysis questionnaire (published in their IPM book on the subject). Dr Kandola demystified the topic and was very happy for the questionnaire to be included in the course notes.

Some time was spent updating knowledge by attending seminars held by the IPM, Saville and Holdsworth Ltd and others, on all aspects of the selection process.

OUTCOMES

Five manuals and one supplementary workbook exist to support the five course units. Each manual stands alone, as well as complementing the others. The style is simple and direct.

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This work could not have been completed without the co-operation and support of NFER–Nelson.

The BPS former guidelines on running testing courses were extremely useful.

A word processor was essential for the production of the materials since they required considerable editing and alteration.

As a result of the need to justify the course content to representatives of the test publishers, the final manuals contained considerably more supporting material than had originally been envisaged.

Changes also had to be made in the light of the experience gained from delivering the courses. These changes reflected the high degree of course-member participation. The exercises themselves accentuated areas of work that needed clarifying or expanding.

The original proposal did not include time to produce a manual for trainers. Following the direct experience of running the course, it was felt that such a manual is essential if future trainers are to run the course effectively.

People offering the units on psychometric testing do need to be trained and experienced and it is likely that in future the course director will have to be a chartered psychologist.

MARKETING

PHASE ONE

Initial assumptions

An initial assumption was made that the companies who had responded positively to the questionnaire were the potential market for the courses. Therefore, the original marketing strategy was based on those companies and the dates of the courses were brought forward to keep the interest and maintain contact.

No attempt was made to identify any specific area of the market, for example, computer staff, but instead to respond to those who completed the questionnaire. An attempt had already been made to select by size of organisation when sending out the original questionnaire.

Initial strategy

All the companies who had expressed an interest in any aspect of recruitment were telephoned. The aim was to maintain interest and to obtain feedback on the timing and structure of the proposed course, particularly the idea of a modular arrangement.

This was followed up by mailing out the brochure. Literature was also sent to all the companies who had returned the questionnaire as well as to a selection who had not responded.

A press release was prepared for insertion in the two local chambers of commerce magazines, though some misgivings were felt about the relevance of our testing courses to their membership as many appeared to be very small retail units.

Brochure

The brochure was intended to look professional, well designed and printed on good quality card. Two brochures were produced; the second had some modifications and included a separate registration card.

The following changes were made to the brochure in the light of experience:

- The dates of the courses were removed and printed on the registration card to enable the brochure to be used for subsequent courses.
- Testing units were separated from the other modules, since the market for Units 1 and 2 was different from the others.
- The wording of the brochure was changed to be more specific about the gains to businesses from our training, in particular the testing units.

Outcomes

The initial marketing strategy did not produce the desired results and it was only possible to pilot the Interview and Counselling Skills course, albeit at an earlier date than originally intended.

PHASE TWO

Strategy

As a result of the poor response, the strategy was changed. Better use was made of free but well-targeted publicity, allowing a more generous timescale, and widening the intended market both geographically and as regards the size of the organisations.

New dates were set for the courses and the brochure was reprinted with the modifications mentioned above.

Mailing

A second mailing was sent to the following wider range of potential clients:

- the original 200 companies who had completed the questionnaire;
- a selection of new advertisers from the local press. Some companies were telephoned before the brochure was sent, and others immediately afterwards;
- forty organisations who were advertising for staff in the *Evening Standard* and *The Guardian* to see if there would be any response from London-based organisations;
- companies which had sent staff on the interview skills course;
- members of the two local chambers of commerce whose secretaries included the brochure in a mailing;
- six IPM local groups whose secretaries made some brochures available to their members;
- the heads of 20 psychology departments in further education who might be interested either in using tests in their own colleges or in putting on a similar course;
- PICKUP Regional Staff Development Officers who could disseminate information on the courses;
- eight recruitment consultants, who were sent letters outlining the possible benefits of widening the service they offered.

Other publicity

The mailing was co-ordinated with other publicity:

- Press releases were sent to several local papers, stressing the value of locally based, high quality training.
- With the help of the IPM, a press release was included in the February 1989 edition of their national publication *The Digest*. The article coincided with the publication of the IPM Code of Practice which stressed the need for good training for test users. The linking of our training programme and the Code of Practice was particularly beneficial, giving our training credibility.
- The Institute of Recruitment Consultants published an article in their members' magazine, Selection, (March 1989), which is also circulated to a national membership. The article outlined the potential benefits to recruitment consultants of expanding the services they offer (see Appendix D).
- As a result of contact with NFER/Nelson, a presentation was held for members of the Association of Managers in Education and Development (AMED) at a conference on testing. Although it was not appropriate to publicise courses at this gathering, valuable experience was gained in using material on testing with a group whose members had very different levels of experience in the use of tests. These sessions were very well received.

Responses to publicity

Publicity mailing of the brochure and covering letter was disrupted by external problems (e.g. a mail strike). At first there was a slow response; the initial requests for information came from staff in the psychology departments of FE colleges. Most were interested in receiving a training in testing in order to run similar courses in their own colleges. Half a dozen or more colleges responded.

After the IPM article was published, the situation changed dramatically. Within a few days enquiries were received from more than 30 companies interested in the modules on testing. They came from a wide variety of fields, and were particularly interested in the status of the qualification and the ways in which our course was different from what was already on the market. Most seemed to be quite well informed about tests and testing courses.

The publicity in the members' journal of the Institute of Recruitment Consultants, also produced a good response. Twenty enquiries were received, most from smaller consultants specialising in middle management recruitment.

COMMENTS AND CONCLUSIONS

A well-produced professional brochure is worth the investment, provided that it is accompanied by an introductory letter of a similar standard.

A good press release preceding an article in a prestigious journal is the most valuable way of publicising courses, and **costs nothing.** It not only reaches the people it is aimed at, but also gives credibility to courses when they are first launched (e.g. the particularly fortuitous timing of the IPM press release).

Direct experience has shown that cold mailshots are of limited value. Companies are quite happy to fill in questionnaires, but less willing to invest money and staff time without previous contact with the institution involved.

Timing a mailshot is a difficult task. Avoid obvious times like Christmas and the summer holiday period. Many companies plan training budgets a year in advance in Spring; therefore, course dates should be planned for a whole year, and sent out well in advance. Smaller companies often find it difficult to spare staff in the period leading up to the end of the financial year.

Wherever possible, brochures were sent to a member of staff whose name was usually obtained from an advertisement; however, this proved difficult since staff lists quickly went out of date because of high staff turnover rates. Any follow up should be carried out as soon as possible.

Secretarial support is very important when marketing a course, as enquiries need to be handled quickly and efficiently if potential members are not to be lost. An answerphone also proved to be crucial to marketing courses.

CONSULTANCY

OBJECTIVES

On the original questionnaire, companies were asked if they would be interested in consultancy help with testing. Such help was offered where a company had a particular recruitment problem which was unique to its business or industry.

For example:

This company is based in the leisure industry, and employs a large number of seasonal staff. They seem always to have expected, and been reasonably happy with, a high turnover of staff, but increased competition has highlighted the need for better motivated and trained employees. Company representatives attended Unit 1 in order to improve their interviewing skills, but it soon became clear that they needed to re-examine their entire recruitment procedure. Assistance was offered but they felt they could handle the review themselves.

There seemed to be a need for training in testing that went beyond the scope of the recruitment and selection courses being offered. For example, companies already using tests might need to improve their interpretation and counselling skills in order to get more out of the information available to them. Alternatively, they might be interested in tests not covered in the basic training, such as personality tests, which can be applied not just to recruitment and selection work but to developmental work with people already employed.

If a company had several members of staff interested in being trained in testing, it would be more appropriate to run specially tailored training appropriate to their business.

The other aim of the offer was to foster links with the local business community and establish the idea of the college as a resource available to them.

ACTION AND CASE STUDIES

Sixteen organisations indicated that they would be interested in consultancy help if it were available. They were contacted with exploratory and extremely time-consuming telephone calls. This resulted in three visits to companies (details below), and one from the personnel manager of a local branch of a large building society — he was leaving the company to set up on his own and was exploring possible openings.

Company 1

This company was a fairly autonomous, small branch of an international organisation (just 38 staff), which provided worldwide engineering consultancy services. It fitted well into the targeted market of the survey. Staff consisted of a managing director, several consulting engineers of various grades, some technical and support staff, secretaries, accounts clerks and a receptionist, who were all supervised by a commercial manager.

After completing the survey questionnaire, the commercial manager was telephoned for supplementary information and asked for assistance with the recruitment of more support staff. The company was in the process of rapid expansion, the current support staff were overloaded, and there had in the past been difficulty in both attracting and retaining good quality staff. The commercial manager had been appointed recently and was anxious to introduce better recruitment procedures. Part of the problem was the proximity to London and the need to pay competitive salaries.

Firstly, a working relationship was established with the manager concerning the entire recruitment process: job descriptions were discussed; advice was given on the wording of advertisements; recommendations were made for the interview shortlist; an active part was taken in the interviews, with personality and ability tests administered to all shortlisted candidates. The test information was used in **conjunction** with the interview to make selection decisions.

During the recruitment drive it became clear that there was some discrepancy between the existing job descriptions and the actual jobs. The support staff were then interviewed in order to produce an accurate analysis of the jobs plus a report on each of the individuals and the working of the department as a whole. This procured detailed information about what people were actually doing, and proved to be a useful exercise in identifying training needs and some personal concerns.

The final task was to help with the recruitment of graduate junior engineers. Over 80 applications had been received; so high level ability tests, which had been previously administered to successful engineers, were used. The resulting profile of necessary results was used to recommend an interview shortlist. Shortlisted candidates were then given a personality questionnaire to advance the decision-making process. As a result, two applicants were offered positions and one more person was asked to appear for a second interview.

Involvement with the company ended when a sceptical new managing director took over, but working with this company provided valuable experience. Counselling expertise proved to be a great asset in getting the most out of test results. Many skills can be transferred from an educational environment to an industrial one. The major lesson was that outside consultants are constantly justifying their presence. They need support from the top and become vulnerable when people at the top change jobs within the company or leave the organisation altogether.

Company 2

This was a relatively small holding company with the head office employing only 25 staff; however there were several companies in the same group. The two main fields of activity were engineering and catering. The turnover of the group was in excess of £30 million.

The managing director had requested help with recruitment and selection. His catering companies were growing at a rate of 40 per cent, and he needed a stable and committed sales staff. The problem was retaining the people recruited. Sales managers did most of the recruiting, primarily from other catering companies in trouble, since **relevant experience** and **technical knowledge** were required for the jobs. The managing director was considering training in recruitment skills for all sales managers.

A written proposal was submitted which included job analysis interviews and testing of current sales staff, assistance with the recruitment of new personnel, and in-house training for the sales managers. There was no response. There are a number of possible reasons why. At the time of the original discussion, another consultant had already been commissioned to do a very extensive marketing report; it was agreed to meet again when this report had been formally presented and digested. This meeting never occurred. A few attempts were made to follow this up but due to illness, the managing director was absent from the company for a while. There had also been some unsuccessful negotiations between the managing director and another section of the college.

Some months later, when contact was made with the managing director in order to find out, for the purposes of this report, why he had felt unable to use our services, he stated that the staffing problem had resolved itself, and that there was a nil turnover of sales staff even though 40 per cent plus is common in the industry as a whole.

It was clear from this experience that if different sections of a college are dealing with potential clients at the same time, then **good communications** and **mutual support** are important.

Company 3

This was an electro-mechanical engineering company, employing 240 people, mainly operatives. When a telephone call was made to obtain some further information for the questionnaire the personnel manager asked for advice on a specific problem. The company employed a large number of Asian assembly workers who, because they were not familiar with English letters and numbers, were unable to assem-

ble a keyboard correctly. The company thought the answer might be to administer a numerical test, but were concerned that it should not be ethnically biased.

It was decided that this was a **training** rather than a **selection** problem; a suggestion that a large demonstration chart should be displayed in a prominent position to enable staff to check their work progress was well received.

This showed that, in some cases, successful consultancy may be no more than a telephone conversation. It also illustrated how difficult it can be for managers to see the obvious solution to a problem when someone offers a more complicated one. This has implications for testing courses, in that a vital part of the first unit must be an accurate appraisal of whether tests are appropriate for the companies concerned.

Company 4

This company had been in existence for only 18 months and was a subsidiary of a very large organisation. It employed 35 staff, but was expanding rapidly. Its business was providing database services to industry, and most of its expansion was in the computing field.

The managing director had indicated that they had no expertise in testing and might need consultancy help. An exploratory meeting was held with her personal assistant who handled most of the personnel work, including recruitment, although pay and pensions were still handled by head office. As it seemed likely that these services were going to move to the database office in the near future, the personal assistant was quite interested in being trained in recruitment skills. There was also the possibility of being involved with the selection of specialised computer staff; they had used consultants before, but not tests.

No more was heard from this company, nor was a follow up instigated. It is possible that an opportunity was missed through lack of aggression, lack of time and other priorities.

Other organisations

All the organisations which had shown an interest in consultancy services of any kind were followed up, initially by telephone and/or letter. There were a number of reasons why no further work materialised. One import company secretary was interested but did not want to proceed. The personnel manager of a construction company was always too busy to talk on the telephone and did not reply to the information that was sent. This was true of several people: a brochure was sent with a covering letter — and no more was heard. The personnel officer of a food manufacturing company who had initially shown interest was replaced by someone who was not interested; a building company had sorted out its problems by the time contact was made; a computer company had sought help elsewhere; an insurance services company was moving out of the area; and a company in the oil business was going through a recession and had no money to spend.

These experiences clearly demonstrated that there is work available, but the timing of the offer is crucial. Constant marketing and regular contact are needed so that the offer of help coincides with the realisation of the current problem or need, the financing, or the right person being available.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COLLEGES WISHING TO PROVIDE CONSULTANCY

- The initial approach to a company should be offered free — the company should clearly understand that this is the case. Consultancy is often synonymous with expense, and smaller companies can be frightened away from this kind of help if they feel they are signing a blank cheque. **It should be clear when payment begins.**

  As an extension of this, it is important that any work done has clearly defined limits. If new work arises from what has already been agreed it requires new negotiations and a new contract.

- **A formal offer should be made in writing,** outlining everything involved in the work under discussion. This can then be adjusted if necessary.
- **Give value for money,** but take care not to underprice. Businesses rate services according to their selling price and college consultancy should not be seen as a cheap alternative to the 'real thing'.
- When assessing the costs of services provided, **do not undervalue time spent working.** Preparation time should be included, as well as any direct consultation that is likely to be necessary.

- **Be very clear about your relationship with company staff.** It is important to know which member of staff is responsible for your work and with whom a contract is held; they may not be the same person, but remember the good opinion of both is required if further work is a desired outcome.

  If influential members of staff change, it is important to establish a relationship as soon as possible with the replacement. It may be necessary to renegotiate the contract as members of staff often exert their new authority by instigating change.

- There are various ways of costing consultancy services. It is very important to remember that little time is spent actually delivering consultancy and time spent marketing a service has to be taken into account when establishing rates.

A price can be set for services rendered on a daily or half-daily basis. This may be the most appropriate method where timing is difficult to assess. If the work is unlikely to fall easily into day or half-day blocks it may be advisable to negotiate an hourly rate. If there is likely to be more than one member of staff working on the contract, make sure that it is understood that these rates are per hour per person. If a relatively clear idea of the scope of the work is held then it may be best to discuss a rate for the whole job. If work hours are miscalculated, renegotiating will be difficult and will not create a good impression.

More than the initial exploratory time may be given free, in anticipation of further work; this will depend on how secure your relationship is with the company in question.

Work may be done free in return for continuing income later, based on the returns from the consultancy help offered. This is sharing the risk with the company. It did not apply to this project, but may well be a valid way of working where research is involved.

The overall guideline is that the total time likely to be involved should always be anticipated along with preparation work off site, time on the telephone, materials such as the paper used in reports, and test materials. These are all part of the service and should be paid for by the client.

REVIEW OF PILOT COURSES

OBJECTIVES

A major objective was to provide good quality training that was competitive in price and comparable in quality to training available elsewhere. This influenced the decision to hold all the workshops in hotels with good conference facilities. Accommodation which had flexible furniture that could be adapted to experiential learning, the usual visual aids and suitable refreshment facilities was specified.

The price at which the workshops were offered was determined by a combination of value for money, accessibility for smaller businesses, and a determination not to undervalue the offer since in industry price is sometimes confused with quality. Although the development costs had been funded by FEU, the offer was pitched at a level where all variable costs were covered to avoid having to offer self-financing courses at much higher rates after the funding had ended.

The price for each workshop day was £125 plus VAT, inclusive of all resources and refreshments; a small discount was offered for registration on all five units or all three testing units, which compared very favourably with courses elsewhere.

Unit 1 — Recruitment and Job Analysis

This unit has not so far been delivered because a viable group has yet to be brought together. The main difficulty has been a lack of time and resources to do adequate marketing.

Unit 2 — Interview and Counselling Skills

This pilot course took place on 20 October 1988 at the Richmond Hill Hotel with seven participants. Small concerns and branches of larger companies were represented: one participant came from a recruitment agency; three together from the leisure industry; one from insurance; one from an engineering company; and one from manufacturing industry.

A technician from the college's Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) unit videoed all the practical sessions, and put them on tape for those participants who were interested. His help was invaluable and certainly contributed to the success of the day.

Participants completed evaluation forms before they left. All the feedback was extremely encouraging, and helped a review of practice.

This experience demonstrated:

- Eight would probably be the ideal number for any workshop with much practical work.
- It was a mistake to have three people in from the same company. They had to work together in the practical sessions which was slightly inhibiting for them, and meant that the group as a whole had less breadth of experience to share.
- More time should have been allowed for discussion, particularly for feedback on the video work. More use could have been made of the material available.

In future, therefore, this unit will be a two-day event. The first day will be for information giving, and an informal practice of skills with thorough briefing and preparation for the video work. The second day will focus entirely on video work, using the interactive video facilities of the CCTV unit. With the extra time, participants can do more preparation for their role plays — there can also be better simultaneous feedback on their performance. This does have some costing implications (see below).

The gross income from this course was £780 plus VAT. Expenses, including the cost of the trainers on the day, were estimated to be approximately £480. However, if the course is run over two days the cost to applicants may rise as running costs would increase daily.

Unit 3 — Introduction to Testing

This took place on 26 April 1989. There were 12 participants, ten from commercial organisations, which were small businesses or branches of larger concerns, and two psychologists from FE colleges.

The day was intended to be both an introduction to testing and the first part of a three-part course for those who were going to proceed with training. This meant that many concepts were introduced that could not be dealt with thoroughly until Units 4 and 5. Although the feedback from the participants was positive — two excellent, ten good — some people went away feeling a little overwhelmed, and that the subject was too big for them to commit themselves any further without time to digest the information presented. This was not necessarily a bad thing as the point was certainly made that the decision to use tests in selection is not something to enter into casually.

Lecture-style presentation with experiential exercises in pairs and groups was alternated with practical exercises. Groups were mainly concerned with the practical implications of introducing selection testing into an organisation. Participants were also given an opportunity to do a test themselves. Many manuals were made available for reference and all participants were given a selection of publishers' catalogues. On balance too much information was given.

While the basic structure of that day was worth keeping, participants could be given something practical to take back to their organisations by making more use of their own case-study material in the syndicate work. The small group-work activities were the events most valued by the majority of participants. An attempt to try and address the needs of those who wanted very specific information could also be made but by focusing on a narrower range of material.

Unit 4 — Test Administration

This session was held on 10 and 11 May 1989; the first day in a hotel, the second in a youth centre that was near the college to make it easier for students to attend. Eight participants from the previous course continued with both Units 4 and 5.

Again, practical and information sessions were alternated. Course members administered a test to each other on the first day, and repeated the exercise with different tests to outsiders on the second day. For both of these sessions the physical environment and suitability of rooms and furniture were extremely important.

The two-day event proved very satisfying The practical sessions were successful and the participants very positive in their feedback. Sending some statistical exercises to complete in advance proved to be a good move, but it was not anticipated how much practice in basic statistics some people would need. The manual was useful for reference both during and after the two-day session.

In the future, both days should be staged at the same venue as it is more relaxing for the participants. Also, the congenial environment of the hotel more than outweighed the disadvantage of being further from the college. Many more worksheets will be prepared to meet the needs of those who find statistics difficult.

Unit 5 — Test Interpretation

This two-day workshop for eight participants took place on 17 and 18 May 1989 at the Richmond Hill Hotel. Most of the theoretical content of the training in testing was concentrated in this unit. It was, therefore, necessary to find a way of teaching to the required standard while retaining the experiential bias of the workshop.

Participants commented that it had been a very exhausting two days but good training. A final test was administered which had been produced using the NFER–Nelson end-of-course test as a model with the company's permission. Seven of the eight participants passed. The eighth person was asked to take the test again.

The following amendments to the course have been proposed:

- participants to be sent more statistical worksheets to complete before day one;
- more than a one-week gap between Units 4 and 5;
- revise the end test by making it longer so that more of the material is adequately covered, with more practical questions (use of manuals, interpretation of results) included;
- provide more continuous assessment during the course.

All participants were offered some post-course supervision:

- telephone contact at any time
- access to course materials
- one hour's consultation at no charge
- at extra cost, a further one-day workshop to look at case work

Twelve people enrolled on the first testing unit (Unit 3). Of these, seven plus another person continued with both Units 4 and 5. Of the remaining four, two have since requested consultancy help, one has enrolled on the next series of test units, and the fourth showed interest but is still considering an appropriate time to continue with training.

CONCLUSIONS

Running the workshops was invaluable experience and enabled a review of materials and the structure to take place each day.

The first testing unit, by concentrating more on information than on skills training and being less experiential, worked very well with 12 participants. For the other more practical workshops, eight was the ideal number of participants.

The experience of using alternative accommodation for the second day of the Test Administration workshop demonstrated both the importance of continuity (same place for all training) and the necessity of getting the physical environment right. Unless purpose-built conference facilities are available in college, it is worth spending the money to hire specialist accommodation.

APPENDIX A

PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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APPENDIX B

SURVEY LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE

Richmond upon Thames College

Egerton Road Twickenham TW2 7SJ
Telephone 01-892 6656 Extn.

Principal G. Rospigliosi BA

our ref

your ref

Dear

Re: Survey on Training needs in Recruitment and Selection

I know that employers and managers have many claims on their time. However, I hope that you will be able to help us by completing the enclosed questionnaire because I do feel that this survey could be valuable to you and to other employers engaged in recruitment and selection.

We are trying to find out how people in this area make selection decisions because it is felt by the Institute of Personnel Management, and supported by research, that nationally methods could be improved, and that smaller businesses and branches of larger organisations could benefit from some of the techniques employed by large companies.

Where we identify needs, Richmond upon Thames College will provide training or consultancy to meet your individual requirements.

Our survey is an initiative by College Staff. It is sponsored by the Further Education Unit which is now an autonomous Company, although previously it was under the control of the Department of Education and Science. This project is part of their PICKUP programme which brings colleges and local industry together.

If you have any questions or comments about the survey do please ring Sue Kerr, the Project Secretary on 892 6656 extension 5226. If necessary Sue Waters, the Project Manager, or Mani Winterstein, the Project Officer, will call you back as soon as possible.

We will be contacting all respondents who indicate an interest in the Project and we would be very grateful if you would return the questionnaire in the enclosed envelope as soon as possible.

Thank you for your help.

Yours sincerely

G. Rospigliosi

G. Rospigliosi BA
Principal

Enc

London Borough of Richmond upon Thames

RICHMOND UPON THAMES COLLEGE

Survey on Training needs in Recruitment and Selection
For the attention of the person with local responsibility for Recruitment and Selection

(A) BUSINESS DETAILS

1 NAME ..... TEL NO .....

2 YOUR JOB TITLE .....

3 NAME OF ORGANISATION .....

4 NATURE OF BUSINESS .....

5 APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES for whom you have recruitment responsibility – (Tick where appropriate)

TECHNICAL – a) Professional ..... b) Technician ..... c) Operative .....

MANAGERIAL – a) Managers ..... b) Supervisors ..... c) Clerical .....

SECRETARIAL – ..... OTHERS .....

6 NUMBER OF PEOPLE APPOINTED IN THE LAST YEAR

a) New posts ..... b) Replacement ..... c) Temporary/seasonal .....

(B) SELECTION METHODS USED (Tick where appropriate)

		Never	Sometimes	Always
1	Interviews			
2	Application forms			
3	References			
4	Psychological tests			
	i) ability			
	ii) personality			
	iii) special aptitudes			
5	Performance Test			
6	Assessment centres			
7	Any other resource (e.g., handwriting, biodata)			
8	How would you assess your current methods?			
	successful ..... good ..... adequate ..... could be improved			
9	What difficulties have you encountered?			

(C) WOULD YOU LIKE HELP WITH: (Tick where appropriate)

1 Writing job descriptions ..... 2 Placing advertisements .....

3 Dealing with applications ..... 4 Interviewing skills .....

(D) PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING

1 If you never use tests, is it because: – (Tick where appropriate)

a) You lack information about tests available .....

b) There is no-one trained in testing .....

c) Financial considerations .....

d) You do not consider they would be useful .....

e) Some other reason .....

2 If you sometimes or always use tests do you: –

a) Employ consultants ..... b) Do your own testing .....

Name of test/publisher ..... Job title/grade .....

4 How much importance is attached to test information in the selection process when tests are used?

5 Do you have other comments to make about testing?

(E) TRAINING/CONSULTANCY

1 Would you be interested in the following services if they were available? (Tick where appropriate)

a) Consultancy help with testing for recruitment and selection .....

b) Training for one/some employee(s) in: –

Job appraisal ..... Test selection ..... Test administration .....

Test interpretation ..... Interview and counselling skills .....

2 What considerations would influence your decision about Training and Consultancy?

Cost ..... Time involved ..... Off-site ..... On-site .....

Please amplify if necessary .....

PLEASE RETURN TO SUE KERR, PICKUP SECRETARY, RICHMOND UPON THAMES COLLEGE IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

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APPENDIX C
COURSE MATERIALS

The contents pages from the manuals and a sample training programme give an indication of the subject matter of these units:

Unit 1

Recruitment and Job Analysis

- contents of the manual
- job analysis
- writing job descriptions
- person specifications
- finding people
- recruitment sources
- advertising
- writing copy
- choosing media
- ethical and legal issues
- processing applications

Workshop Materials

— References
— Forms: Job analysis interview
— Job description
— Person specification
— Exercises

Unit 2

Interview and Counselling Skills

- contents of the manual
- purpose of the selection interview
- different methods of selection
- criticisms of the interview
- advantages of the selection interview
- improving the interview
- types of interview
- interview format
- interview strategies
- structure patterns
- preparation for an interview
- WASP: stages in the interview
  - — welcome
  - — acquire
  - — supply
  - — plan
- skills
- assessment and decision making
- discrimination

Workshop Materials

- — References
- — Exercises

Unit 3

Introduction to Testing

- definitions
- types of standardised occupational test
  - group/individual tests
  - timed/untimed tests
  - general ability
  - specific aptitudes
  - interests
  - achievement
  - personality
- place of tests in selection
  - alternatives to testing
  - benefits and limitations
  - economics of testing
  - different methods of using tests
  - introducting tests into the organisation
- test availability and training
  - requirements to be a registered user of tests
- issue in testing
  - confidentiality
  - copyright
  - training
  - equal opportunities

Unit 4

Test Interpretation

- use of basic statistics
- test administration
  - test preparation
  - good practice: before, during and after the session
- criteria for selection
  - validity
  - reliability
  - manual usability
  - cost: time, resources
  - availability
  - equal opportunities
- test statistics
  - how to score tests

Unit 5

Test Interpretation

- ability
  - — concept of intelligence
  - — different theories
  - — tests related to theories
- test construction
  - — main stages
  - — item types and analysis
- correlation
  - — definition, graphical examples
- reliability
  - — definition
  - — test-retest
  - — use of test examples
  - — standard error of measurement
- validity
  - — definition
  - — types of validity
  - — criteria for measuring job success
  - — examples of validation studies
- interpretation and feedback
  - — revision of statistics
  - — standard error of measurement
  - — test scores in context
  - — comparisons between people
  - — feedback to clients and others

SAMPLE TRAINING PROGRAMME

Programme for Unit 3 Introduction to Testing

9.00	Coffee/Registration	1.00	Lunch
9.15	Introduction	2.00	Syndicate work Issues to do with testing
	Effective selection		Quiz
	Reasons for testing		Evaluation
	Test terminology and definitions		
		5.00	Finish
10.45	Coffee		
11.00	Experience of doing a test		
	Costs and benefits of testing		

APPENDIX D

AN EXAMPLE OF PRESS COVERAGE

Psychometric Tests - the Benefits for Recruitment Consultants

Mani Winterstein introduces a new course at Richmond upon Thames College .

As employers face a shortage of skilled labour in the coming decade, recruiting and keeping the right staff is going to become vital. Recruitment consultants will be asked to supply more and more detailed information on the staff they recommend in order to enable companies to make the right decisions.

The use of good psychometric tests can help you to do this by providing objective and unbiased information about skills that are often impossible to assess at an interview. While typing and numeracy tests are standard, psychometric testing is often only used at management level. The increasing range of good tests on the market can assess the wide range of skills needed for a large variety of jobs. These include sales personnel, clerks, word-processors, and engineers among others, and test skills like reasoning. Test results can also indicate areas which need following up at the interview stage, and, where staff are appointed, can identify training needs.

Most companies without large personnel departments and constant recruitment drives find providing the space, time and trained personnel for testing difficult, but are becoming increasingly aware of the advantages of using tests in selection. Recruitment consultants are particularly well placed to improve on the service they provide for their clients by including testing. By training one of your own staff to administer and interpret tests you can avoid calling in expensive consultants to test for you, and can offer a service which our research has shown to be of considerable interest to increasing numbers of companies.

Training is often time-consuming and expensive but in a new course being run at Richmond on Thames College we have tried to address both these problems. We are providing a unit-based course which will allow participants to limit their time away from work to one or two days a week, over a period of several weeks. In addition, due to Government funding, we are able to offer low-cost high quality training which will enable course members who successfully complete the course to purchase most ability tests.

The testing part of the course consists of an Introductory day to familiarise participants with the use of Testing in Selection. It will include information on different types of tests, their benefits and limitations, availablity, and publishers, and training requirements. This may be similar to the testing element in the Diploma course, and is not a requirement for anyone who has already adequately covered the same topics. The remainder of the course consists of two two-day units. The first of these leads to a qualification that will enable members to administer and score tests, but not to purchase or interpret scores. The responsibility for interpretation must be taken by someone who has completed the full course. The final unit of two days on Test Interpretation is a follow-on for those who have completed the Administration unit and will include the theoretical concepts of testing as well as practical experience in scoring, interpretation and choosing appropriate tests. The cost of the three-unit (5-day) package is £600 which compares very favourably with similar courses in the private sector.

Source: 'Psychometric Tests — the Benefits for Recruitment Consultants' in *Selection* No. 54, March 1989.
Selection is the monthly journal of the Institute of Employment Consultants.

APPENDIX E

TEST STANDARDS GUIDELINES

The British Psychological Society had a standing committee which monitored training courses in testing. In 1986 (Marshall) it was reported as accrediting 48 courses run by 27 different organisations. A review of this practice has led to a change in the name to 'Steering Committee on Test Standards', and abandoning of the practice of reviewing and accrediting courses. This leaves the test publishers with the problem of deciding how to identify the people who have been adequately trained and to whom they should sell tests.

Currently, the BPS are trying to establish a register of Chartered Psychologists. 'This will effectively regulate practice in the area of psychometric testing, as publishers will be able to assume that non-psychologists who have passed a course taught by a chartered psychologist will have had appropriate training for the test on which they have been trained.' (Marshall, 1986)

In the intervening period it is in the interests of would-be course providers to follow the original guidelines of the old Test Standards Committee.

APPENDIX F

TERMINOLOGY USED IN TESTING

The following is an edited extract from the manual which accompanies Unit 3 — An Introduction to Testing.

A psychological test is a 'structured task on the basis of which inferences are drawn concerning the aptitudes, attainments, abilities, personality, interests (behavioural tendencies, inner mental states, preferences)'.

It is not the same as the 'end-of-term' test a teacher might put together (e.g. 20 algebra questions), or even the 'performance' test that a supervisor in the workplace might use to rate a new employee (e.g. cut a piece of wood according to a specification), although these might serve the purposes for which they were intended very well.

Psychometric tests are different in that they are STANDARDISED, and, therefore, OBJECTIVE which means they are fair to all candidates. Briefly, this involves the following:

- proper test construction: items are analysed to ensure that bad candidates do not score as well as good candidates;
- reliability and validity studies are done, and statistics are available;
- relevant normative information is available to permit comparisons to be made;
- standardised procedures are laid down for the administration of the test;
- questions are usually in a form, (multiple choice, true/false, rating scale) that permits objective scoring of answers;
- scoring is also standardised, either by the use of templates or keys, or done on a computer;
- tests are only available to those with the required training.

The main kinds of test used for occupational selection are:

- Ability tests: general intelligence or specific aptitude such as verbal reasoning or spatial awareness.
- Personality questionnaires: measures of different aspects of human behaviour such as extroversion, assertiveness, warmth.
- Interest questionnaires: measures of preference for particular activities or jobs.
- Attainment: measures of learning, such as reading, mathematical knowledge, or typing skill.

APPENDIX G

USEFUL NAMES AND ADDRESSES

Assessment and Selection for Employment
NFER-Nelson
Darville House
2 Oxford Road East
Windsor
Berks
SL4 1DF
Tel: 0753 858961

British Psychological Society
St Andrews House
48 Princess Road East
Leicester
LE1 7DR
Tel: 0533 549568

Commission for Racial Equality
Elliot House
10/12 Allington Street
London
SW1E 5EN
Tel: 071 828 7022

Educational and Industrial Test Services Ltd
83 High Street
Hemel Hempstead
Herts
Tel: 0442 56773

Equal Opportunities Commission
Overseas House
Quay Street
Manchester
M3 3HN
Tel: 061 833 9244

Further Education Unit
2 Orange Street
London
WC2H 7WE
Tel: 071 321 0433

The Institute of Personnel Management
IPM House
Camp Road
Wimbledon
London
SW19 4UX
Tel: 081 946 9100

The Open College
101 Wigmore Street
London
W1H 9AA
Tel: 071 935 8088

PICKUP Office
Department of Education and Science
Elizabeth House
York Road
London
SE1 7PH
Tel: 071 934 9670

The Psychological Corporation Ltd
Foots Cray High Street
Sidcup
Kent
DA14 5HP
Tel: 081 300 1149

Saville and Holdsworth Ltd
3 AC Court
High Street
Thames Ditton
Surrey
KT7 0SR
Tel: 081 398 4170

Science Research Associates Ltd
Newtown Road
Henley-on-Thames
Oxon
RG9 1EW
Tel: 0491 410111

The Test Agency
Cournswood House
North Dean
High Wycombe
Bucks
HP14 4NW
Tel: 024 024 3384

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GLOSSARY

AMED	Association of Managers in Education and Development
BPS	British Psychological Society
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
CRE	Commission for Racial Equality
ECCTIS	Education Counselling and Credit Transfer Information System
EOC	Equal Opportunities Commission
FEU	Further Education Unit
GMA	Graduate and Managerial Assessment
IEC	Institute of Employment Consultants
IPM	Institute of Personnel Management
TEED	Training Enterprise and Education Directorate (formerly the Training Agency)
TVEI	Technical and Vocational Education Initiative

PICKUP (Professional, Industrial and Commercial Updating) is an initiative by the Department of Education and Science to stimulate the updating role of education and the part colleges, polytechnics and universities can play in meeting the needs of business for post-experience education and training. Regional Development Agents act as focal points for PICKUP in their localities. They link central and local initiatives for adult education and training, co-ordinating and advising on the various elements of the PICKUP programme. For further information please contact:

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The Further Education Unit (FEU) was established by the Department of Education and Science to give guidance and support to the further education system. FEU advocates and seeks to make possible a more co-ordinated approach to curriculum development, in support of its remit to promote, encourage and develop better learning opportunities in further education. For more information, please contact:

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